

Agency Information

AGENCY : SSCIA
RECORD NUMBER : 157-10011-10026

RECORD SERIES : TRANSCRIPT

AGENCY FILE NUMBER : R-173

Document Information

ORIGINATOR : SSCIA
FROM :
TO :

TITLE : TESTIMONY OF COLBY, WILLIAM E.

DATE : 06/04/1975
PAGES : 109

SUBJECTS :

ASSASSINATIONS
CASTRO
COLBY, WILLIAM E.
WIRETAPS
MAFIA
OPERATION MONGOOSE
CUBAN OPERATION

DOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION : Unclassified
RESTRICTIONS : 1A; 1B
CURRENT STATUS : Redact
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 05/29/1996

OPENING CRITERIA :

COMMENTS : SSCI Box 239, Folder 16

The United States Senate

R173

3 OF 6

Report of Proceedings

INVENTORIED:

ON 2/22/77
BY BC

Hearing held before

INVENTORIED:

ON 5/18/77
BY EC

Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations

With Respect to Intelligence Activities

COMMITTEE MEETING

Record Number 157-10011-10026

SSCI Box 239, Folder 16

Wednesday, June 4, 1975

Washington, D. C.

(Stenotype Tape and Waste turned over
to the Committee for destruction)

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~~TOP SECRET~~

1 inga special group meeting. And it was left that that was on the
2 record vague. After the special group meeting, did the CIA
3 station in Santo Domingo push further for the delivery of weapons
4 as a gesture of U.S. support of dissidents?

5 Mr. Colby. Yes, there was considerable discussion with
6 a dissident group down there. And the question -- they made
7 a particular point out of needing some warrant of our serious
8 interest in supporting it. And the station was urging that
9 this be done through the provision of some weapons.

10 Mr. Schwarz. And did the station indicate that the
11 persons who wanted the weapons had stated that the object of ob-
12 taining this kind of help is the elimination of Trujillo?

13 Mr. Colby. Yes. And two of the individuals on the 15th
14 of February said that the object was the elimination of
15 Trujillo. Instead of using arms or grenades, he began to
16 speak of a bomb and of poisoning.

17 Senator Baker. . . That is quoting the man requesting it?

18 Mr. Colby. Yes, the requestor.

19 He also described a possible ambush.

20 Mr. Schwarz. Now, who was the chief of station in
21 Santo Domingo in 1961?

22 Mr. Colby: Mr. Robert Owen

1(A)

23 Mr. Schwarz. Did the Chief of Station on March 17, 1961
24 cable the CIA headquarters reiterating his suggestion to
25 send in diplomatic pouches one small sized high-fire power
 weapon, because Mr. Dearborn -- was Mr. Dearborn the Ambassador

1 Mr. Schwarz. And the CIA headquarters told him that no
2 authorization exists to suspend the pouching regulations
3 against shipment of articles on March 20, 1961, is that right?

4 Mr. Colby. Right.

5 Mr. Schwarz. Did the Chief of Station reply on March 22
6 that "he knew that at last two posts received pistols by a pouch
7 for worthy purposes"?

8 Mr. Colby. Yes.

9 I think we are talking about pouch as a term of art here.
10 I think there are obviously ways to ship weapons to an embassy,
11 we need them for our Marine guards among other things. And
12 I think the question here was whether they would use the
13 diplomatic pouch in concealing the fact that they were weapons,
14 and that there was no opposition for that.

15 Mr. Schwarz. And there were some regulations against using
16 the diplomatic pouch for that purpose?

17 Mr. Colby. The standing regulation does say, you shall
18 not ship firearms in pouches.

19 Mr. Schwarz. What had been the two posts that [REDACTED] 1(A)
20 [REDACTED] Owen had prior to Santa Domingo?

21 Mr. Breckinridge. Mr. Schwarz told me this morning to find
22 out. [REDACTED] He was in Barcelona-- and these dates are subject to
23 correction, but I believe they are correct -- he was there

24 [REDACTED] in Barcelona from April 1951 to July 1954. A short interim
25 [REDACTED] period on leave and at headquarters. And then from November of

1B

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1 1954, until about July 1960, he was in Brussels.

1(A)

2 Mr. Schwarz. [Mr. Owen] stated to headquarters that in
3 response to their comment that you shouldn't send weapons
4 through the diplomatic pouch, he had at his last two posts,
5 which were Brussels and Barcelona, received pistols through the
6 diplomatic pouch for "worthy purposes."

1(B)

7 What were those purposes?

8 Mr. Colby. I don't know.

9 Mr. Breckinridge. We don't know.

10 Mr. Colby. I might add one comment here, that head-
11 quarters cabled to station on the 20th of March "Regret no author-
12 ization exists to suspend pouch regulations against shipment
13 of articles".

14 Now, the way many of these messages leave our headquarters
15 is that they are signed off at the division level. And that
16 could have reflected the division's communicating with the
17 station, saying, I haven't gotten an exception from our
18 normal rules for you yet, really, that the exception might
19 be granted further up in the approval chain, but that as of this
20 day, in response to the station's cable, they had not gotten the
21 exception.

22 In other words, if we had a good reason to send weapons
23 to a certain station, I am sure we could find a way to do it
24 today.

25 Mr. Schwarz. Can you find out what the "worthy purposes"

1 were pursuant to which **Mr. Owen** needed those pistols?

1(A)

2 Mr. Colby. We can ask **Mr. Owen**, yes.

3 Mr Schwarz. Is the reference to W.H. in the March 22 cab
4 cable, which states "WH not prepared take this step" -- and the
5 step being shipment of weapons through the pouch -- to the
6 White House, or to the CIA's WH Division?

7 Mr. Colby. That is the division I am on.

8 Senator Baker. Mr. Chairman.

end nash
mhl fols

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1

The Chairman. Senator Baker.

2

Senator Baker. As the Director knows, this caused us
great grief at one time.

4

Mr. Colby. We have changed the name of that since,
5 Senator.

6

Senator Baker. Could you, for the sake and the gratifi-
cation of my longstanding concern in that respect, supply for
8 the record a further identification for that as Western
9 Hemisphere instead of White House?

10

Mr. Colby. I want to make sure that this is what this
11 says. This is a reply from the station. And it sounds to me
12 like in this case that he really means Western Hemisphere
13 Division.

14

Senator Baker. Is there some way we can determine
15 whether he is talking about White House or Western Hemisphere?

16

Mr. Colby. This supports my previous comment about the
17 level of approval and authorization. In other words, the
18 Chief of Station normally deals with his division. He thinks
19 of his division as his headquarters, the chain of command for
20 him, with the realization that there are levels of approval
21 above the division which can get exemption to certain regula-
22 tions if it were appropriate. And from my reading of many
23 cables over the years, I can smell this one pretty clearly as
24 a communication between station and division, talking about
25 Western Hemisphere Division. We can check with ~~Mr. Ober~~, but

1(A)

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1 it comes out pretty clearly.

2 Senator Tower. ~~Mr. Own~~ still employed by the Agency? 1(A)

3 Mr. Colby. Yes.

4 Mr. Schwarz. Following the initial turndown of delivery
5 by the pouch, did the Agency in fact ship the revolvers some-
6 time after March 25th and were authorized by Mr. Bissell to do
7 so?

8 Mr. Colby. I don't think we shipped the revolvers. What
9 we shipped ; were carbines.

10 Mr. Breckinridge. I think that we shipped some sub-
11 machine guns.

12 Mr. Schwarz. If you look at the record for March 25,
13 1961, it states in a cable authorized by Mr. Bissell, "We
14 support a program to replace the Trujillo regime. We wish to
15 avoid precipitated action if planning is not well organized,
16 as appears to be the case. Machine guns and ammunition will be
17 supplied to demonstrate good will to the dissidents who
18 requested revolvers and are being pouched."

19 Mr. Colby. But I think elsewhere in the record it is
20 indicated that we could -- look back on page 39 -- we find
21 notations that the revolvers were actually pouched. We are
22 just not very clear on that.

23 Mr. Schwarz. The first instance where this document
24 admits that weapons were in fact sent and delivered is under
25 the heading "March 26, 1961." And it refers to three

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1 Then in March the approval of the passage, I think,
2 without any substantial difference in policy, expressed in the
3 interim. Probably that is a formal approval. It would be
4 considered adequate for the actual passage in March. Now, I
5 imagine, however, that there was a certain amount of pre-
6 exchange of information with the Embassy in Dominican Republic
7 and also with the State Department here.

8 Mr. Schwarz. On March 31, 1961 the actual passing of
9 the carbines was approved in a cable released by Mr. Bissell,
10 is that right?

11 Mr. Colby. It was approved, yes, in a cable 31 March.

12 Mr. Schwarz. And Mr. Bissell released the cable, is that
13 right?

14 Mr. Colby. Yes.

15 Mr. Schwarz. The Chief of Station, ~~Mr. Owen~~, continued 1(A)
16 to ask for more weapons through the pouch.

17 Mr. Colby. Right.

18 Mr. Schwarz. And there is an indication that some
19 approval of pouching more weapons was granted by Headquarters
20 in April 1961, is that right, April 12, 1961?

21 Mr. Breckinridge. They sent more guns, but never did
22 have authority to release guns.

23 Mr. Colby. They did approve the shipment of submachine
24 guns, but these were never -- the Station was never authorized
25 to release those to the dissidents.

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1 The Chairman. From the State Department to the Charge,
2 on what we have speculated must be the instructions of the
3 President. And that remains to be determined positively.

4 Now, two days later we get this cable from the Chief
5 of Station to the CIA. And those words are quoted in the
6 record: "Assume the 29 May policy cable from State to
7 Dearborn is final word on present policy on which CIA

(blank)

8 be based. This for practical purposes retreats
9 from previous policy. However, Headquarters is aware extent
10 to which US Government already associates with an assassination.
11 If we are to at least try to cover up tracks, CIA personnel
12 directly involved in an assassination preparation must be
13 withdrawn now. If an assassination tried and not successful,
14 immediate evacuation ~~of Chief of Station, the operations~~
15 ~~officer, and the administrative assistant~~, mandatory." 1(B)

16 Now, we must have the full cables of course in this case.

17 But I really believe that some very serious questions
18 are left unanswered by this record.

19 Senator Mathias. Mr. Chairman, I might recall that
20 Shakespeare anticipated this situation when he said, when you
21 strike a king you must kill him.

22 Mr. Colby. There was also a companion cable from the
23 Charge to the Department making more or less the same problem,
24 that there was substantial proof of US involvement in these
25 matters. That cable was dated on 31 May. It was actually

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